

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

----- 027668

P R 171040Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1628

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

JCS WASHDC

INFO CINCPAC

CINCUNC KOREA

S E C R E T SEOUL 08473

EXDIS

JOINT EMBASSY/UNC MESSAGE

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR FOLLOWING REASONS:

(ADDRESSEE CORRECTED TO READ CINCUNC KOREA VICE CINCUNC)

(CAPTION JOINT EMBASSY/UNC MESSAGE MOVED TO CORRECT POSITION
WITHIN MESSAGE)

(REF C CORRECTED TO READ CTF 210 VICE TCF210)

(LAST WORD LINE SIX PARA 1. SUBPARA A) TO READ DO/P-Y VICE DO/P-6)

(LAST TWO WORDS PARA 1. LINE THREE SUBPARA C) TO READ PUBLICLY OR
VICE PUBLICLY)

(ADD WORD TO BEGINNING OF LINE THREE PARA 3. -- CHARGE)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR MOPS PBOR KS KN

SUBJECT: DEFUSING WESTERN COASTAL ISLAND SITUATION

REF: A STATE 245617 AND ITS REFERENCES

B COMNAV FOR KOREA 110311Z DEC 73

C CTF 210 021425Z DEC 73

SUMMARY. EMBASSY/UNC BELIEVE THAT DISCREPANCIES
NOTED IN REF A BETWEEN CINCUNC/EMBASSY REPORTING AND
PRESS AND ROK VERSIONS OF NORTHWEST COAST EVENTS ARE MORE
APPARENT THAN REAL. AT SAME TIME WE SHARE
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WASHINGTON AGENCIES' CONCERN THAT ROKG HANDLING
PUBLIC POLICY ASPECTS THIS SITUATION COULD EXACERBATE
FRICTIONS AND AGREE WE SHOULD URGE ROKS TONE DOWN
THEIR PUBLIC LINE THIS SUBJECT. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING ARE OUR COMMENTS ON LETTERED
SUB PARAS, PARA 1, REF A.

A) AS INDICATED IN REFERENCE B, MILITARY

RESUPPLY RUNS ARE IRREGULAR, SUBJECT TO CHANGE,
AND DEPENDENT ON EXTREME TIDES IN THAT PART
OF THE YELLOW SEA. SUPPLY RUNS ARE CONDUCTED ON THE
AVERAGE OF ONCE PER WEEK. AS IT HAPPENED,
LAST WEEK, LSM-613 MADE THE USUAL U-DO/Y-P DO/P-Y
DO/Y-P DO RUN WHILE THE LST-809 MADE A SCHEDULED
TRIP FROM CHINHAEE CARRYING MATERIAL FOR THE ROKAF
RADAR SITE. BOTH SHIPS ARRIVED AT P-Y DO WITHIN
24 HOURS OF EACH OTHER. WEEKLY FERRY TRAFFIC WAS
NORMAL WITH ONE SAILING TO P-Y DO AND ONE TO Y-P
DO. A SECOND LST WAS SCHEDULED TO SAIL FROM CHINHAEE
AND WOULD HAVE ARRIVED AT PAY DO LATE IN THE WEEK
BUT THE TRANSIT WAS POSTPONED BY THE UNC NAVAL
COMMANDER TO AVOID THE APPEARANCE OF INCREASED
SUPPORT ACTIVITY.

B) THE ENGLISH PRESS REPORTS APPEAR TO BE BASED
ON A MIS-TRANSLATION OF KOREAN PRESS ACCOUNTS.
ROKGS TERRITORIAL WATER CLAIMS GO OUT TO THREE
(3) MILES AND NO FARTHER AND LIKE OURSELVES
ROKS CLAIM THREE MILES AS POINT AT WHICH
"VIOLATIONS" BEGIN.

C) WE BELIEVE QUOTED PASSAGE IS SIMPLY SPECULATION
AS TO ONE OF POSSIBLE MOTIVATIONS OF NORTH
ROKS HAVE AT NO TIME STATED PUBLICLY OR
PRIVATELY THAT THEY SEEK TO BLOC HAEJU. TO
CONTRARY ALL THEIR STATEMENTS INCLUDING ONE
FROM MND YU CITED INDICATE ROKS WILL ONLY
ACT DEFENSIVELY IN AREA SOUTH OF HAEJU.

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D) WHILE ON ESCORT MISSIONS, THE DD TYPE
VESSELS ARE MAINTAINING STATION GENERALLY TEN
MILES TO SEAWARD OF THE ESCORTED SHIPS AND
CONSEQUENTLY ON THESE MISSIONS THEY ARE EVEN FARTHER THAN TEN MILES
FROM NORTH KOREAN COAST, EXCEPT IN THE VICINITY OF THE
ISLANDS WHERE THEY REMAIN EITHER IN INTERNATIONAL
WATERS (TWELVE MILES FROM THE NORTH KOREAN COAST)
OR WITHIN THREE MILES (TERRITORIAL WATERS) OF THE
ISLANDS. THIS IS IN ACCORD WITH POLICY SET
FORTH IN REF: C. WE ASSUME THIS QUERY
RELATES TO RECENT INCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED IN
THE VICINITY OF SOCHANG-DO. ON THE 11TH OF
DECEMBER, NK PT BOATS ON HIGH SPEED RUN CLOSED

TO WITHIN FIVE MILES OF DD-96 WHILE SHE WAS ON ROUTINE PATROL 37 DEGREES 30 MINUTES NORTH BY 125 DEGREES 15 MINUTES EAST. THE CLOSEST DISTANCE TO NK ALONG THAT LINE IS APPROXIMATELY TEN MILES. ALSO ON THE 11TH, THE PT'S CLOSED TO WITHIN 4,000 YARDS OF THE ROK PGM-11 WHILE SHE WAS WITHIN THREE MILES OF SOCHANG-DO AND ENGAGED IN ESCORTING THE LST-809 TO P-Y DO. THE PT'S CLOSED THE PGM FROM ASTERN ON APPROXIMATELY PARALLEL COURSES.

2. EMBASSY SHARES CONCERN EXPRESSED PARA 2, REF A OVER ROK BLUSTERING. STRONG ROK STANCE HAS EMANATED FROM PRESIDENT PARK WHO AS INDICATED REF D HAS BEEN SAYING NORTH ONLY UNDERSTANDS FORCE. PRESIDENT MAY ALSO BE VENTING FRUSTRATION AT NOT BEING ABLE TO CRACK DOWN HARDER ON HIS DOMESTIC OPPONENTS. HE IS FIRMLY SUPPORTED BY STAFF ELEMENTS OF ROK ARMY WHO SEEM TO VIEW ANY REARRANGEMENT DISPUTED SEA BOUNDARIES AS A LOSS OF TERRITORY.

3. DURING FAREWELL CALL ON ASSEMBLY SPEAKER CHONG IL-KWAN WHO IS LEAVING FOR INDIA THIS WEEK, CHARGE SAID WE MUST BE CAREFUL NOT TO LET NORTH KOREANS DRAW US INTO TRAP OF AN INCIDENT IN WHICH MOST OF THE WORLD WOULD SEE THE ROK AND US AS BEING IN THE WRONG. THE ROK PUBLIC
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POSITION ALSO SEEMED TO US UNNECESSARILY BELLIGERENT. CHONG AGREED THAT THE NORTH'S PURPOSE WAS PRIMARILY POLITICAL, BUT MADE NO COMMENT ON THE ROKG PUBLIC HANDLING OF PROBLEM. CHARGE HAS APPOINTMENT TO CALL ON NEWLY INITIATED FOREIGN MINISTER KIM DONG JO DECEMBER 18 AND WILL RAISE SUBJECT IN GREATER DETAIL WITH HIM.
UNDERHILL

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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